

# Man says Gulf War made him ill

MEDFORD (AP) — Before he served in the Persian Gulf War, Chris Chesselet never had any serious health problems.

Now Chesselet, 25, lives in the Veterans' Affairs Domiciliary, where his ailments include chronic fatigue, back pain, bleeding gums, headaches, cold sweats and forgetfulness.

In the spring of 1992, he was treated for kidney failure.

"It's scary," Chesselet said. "I don't know what's going to happen next. Am I going to have cancer in two years? What else is going to happen?"

Chesselet believes he was made sick by the war, possibly because of chemical or biological contamination.

Chesselet received a medical discharge from the Army in August 1992.

The problem has been tracing his illness to the Persian Gulf, said Dr. Bonnar Dysart, chief of medical services at the domiciliary.

"Getting objective findings, that's the rub," he said.

Gulf War Syndrome symptoms typically include muscle aches, fatigue, hair loss and diarrhea, he said, citing reports from Veterans' Administration hospitals.

"Those are also the complaints we have seen in a couple of gulf veterans here," Dysart said. "We are encouraging all Persian Gulf vets to come in and get a baseline exam."

Dysart said the information would be used to determine the extent of the problem.

"I feel the VA is giving them the benefit of the doubt," Dysart said of the veterans who have the ailment. "The VA is assuming there is a problem."

Chesselet said troops were given a short class on how to defend against chemical or biological warfare. They were issued chemical suits, but he and the other soldiers never wore them.

"They gave us anthrax vaccines. That really concerns me," Chesselet said. "They put us in a line,

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chief of medical services, Veterans' Affairs  
Domiciliary

had us sign a waiver and gave us the shots. And they told us not to tell anyone about it."

Chesselet was working as a water purification specialist when a scud missile slammed to earth about four miles away. No one donned a gas mask or chemical suit during the incident, he said.

Later, he worked at a laundry, processing uniforms for troops stationed at the front.

Chesselet was discharged from the Army in April 1991. In April 1992, he was taken to the emergency room of a hospital in Coos Bay for treatment of kidney failure.

"I've never had that problem before," he said. "I couldn't walk 15 feet without keeling over."

Father Martin LeRoy, an Anglican Catholic priest who has been a close friend for five years, said Chesselet had changed when he returned from the war.

"He couldn't sit down, always pacing back and forth," LeRoy said. "He would forget things. He would be walking down the street and forget where he was going."

Chesselet also endured cold sweats, itching and nightmares, his friend said.

Chesselet isn't complaining about his military experience or the medical care he is receiving.

"Nobody really knows what's going on so there is only so much they can do," he said. "I want to know what's wrong with me. I didn't feel like this before the Gulf War."

# Fish found in lake near volcano

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) — State researchers made an important breakthrough in their study of how a volcanic eruption affects a natural ecosystem: They caught a fish.

Jim Byrd, a state biologist, recently captured a healthy, eight-inch rainbow trout in Spirit Lake, which was filled with ash and debris after Mount St. Helens erupted. It's the first confirmed capture of a trout in Spirit Lake since the 1980 eruption, state wildlife officials said.

Byrd, a Department of Wildlife employee at the fish collection station on Toutle River, made the catch by hiking down to the 2,500-acre lake from the Windy Ridge area and setting two gill nets from an inflatable raft.

When Mount St. Helens erupted on May 18, 1980, it leveled 230 square miles of forest, killed 57 people and spread volcanic debris over a vast area — including Spirit Lake. The resulting wave splashed 600 feet up the opposite shore.

For years, however, scientists have speculated that trout had returned to the lake.

Byrd said he did not see indi-

cations of fish but assumes more trout live there.

"It would be a real shot in the dark to catch the only fish in the lake," he said.

At the request of researchers, the Forest Service and its Mount St. Helens Scientific Advisory Board, the state did not stock Spirit Lake, once a popular fishing and camping spot.

Spirit Lake offers a chance to study a body of water that "had its biochemistry turned on its head," said Peter Frenzen, a Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument scientist.

"It's important to the ecologist and fish manager to have these systems that aren't stocked to learn and understand about these life forms," he said.

The monument calls for no sport fisheries at Spirit Lake. The discovery of the trout does not change that, Frenzen said.

The post-eruption lake is almost twice the size of the original and 211 feet higher in elevation.

The lake was filled with a stew that included ash, avalanche debris, trees and forest foliage. In the two years after the eruption, the water boiled

**'The rainbow (trout) was a surprise.'**

— Jim Byrd,  
Department of Wildlife  
biologist

with escaping carbon dioxide and methane gas as bacteria blooms created a lake devoid of oxygen.

It was unlikely that fish would have survived much beyond the blast, scientists said.

It is not clear where the trout came from.

Lake trout — a form of char, not a true trout — were documented several years ago in St. Helens Lake, a small lake northwest of Spirit Lake, and wildlife biologist Bob Lucas "was thinking lake trout might have dropped into Spirit," Byrd said.

"The rainbow was a surprise."

St. Helens Lake was stocked with rainbows in 1951, but no rainbow catches were logged in occasional surveys of sports catches between 1951 and 1980, he said.

# Man says Canadian Indian tribe not extinct

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — A man who says he belongs to an Indian tribe the Canadian government contends is extinct has been ordered to leave Canada.

Robert Watt has spent the past five years as caretaker at an ancient native Indian burial site in the West Kootenay area of southwestern British Columbia.

Watt, 40, says he is a member of the Sinixt, or Arrow Lakes, people who roamed through the B.C. Interior and Washington state for 3,500 years.

But the Canadian government declared the tribe extinct in the 1950s after the last registered Sinixt (pronounced Sin-eye-ixt) died.

"I am very much alive," Watt said. "My people are alive, too."

Watt was born in Nespelem, Wash., where the Sinixt are still recognized as one of the Colville Confederated Tribes.

The Canadian government says smallpox decimated the tribe and many Sinixt were absorbed or married into neighboring bands.

Watt said the Sinixt were more numerous than the government realized but because they were a nomadic and unassimilated people, they kept to wilderness areas and avoided Canadian census takers.

Watt believes there are several hundred Sinixt still living in the B.C. Interior.

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